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WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

THE continent of Australia may be likened to one immense plain, with a fringe of highlands dividing the interior from the encircling sea. On the west this fringe extends about two hundred miles inwards, and merges in the great plain at an elevation of some two thousand feet. Thus, while possessing a bold outline of rocky ranges as its boundary on the seaward side, the vast territory of Western Australia finds its eastern limit fading into an arid azure of blue-gum trees, sandy wastes, and salt marshes. It is the vastness and the aridity of this great central plain which influence the whole character of the island-continent of Australia, and which affect its peoples more even than the oceans which surround it.

Australia is to us now one continent, but in the youth of the world its eastern and western portions were separate islands. They only became united at what geologists call a 'comparatively recent' epoch. The western island was the more ancient as well as the larger of the two. At some remote period it was united with the Asiatic continent, from which it received the ancestral forms of what are now regarded as the peculiar Australian flora and fauna. The Western Australia we now know is the remnant of the vast primeval island which at some far-back period was severed from the Asiatic continent.

It was in 1527 that the island-continent was made known to travellers from the northern hemisphere. Menezes, the Portuguese, in that year discovered what he called Terra Australis Incognita; and soon after him came the Dutch, who examined, and bestowed many names on, parts of the western coast. There came one Dutchman, Houtmann, who gave his name to a small group of islands; another, Doore, who gave his name to an island in Shark's Bay; another, Edel, who gave his name to the district around the Bay; another, who named Cape Leeuwin after his own ship; another, who gave the name of Nuytsland to the coast east of Cape Leeuwin. And so on, until, in 1665, the Dutch

government complacently named the whole continent 'New Holland.' Soon after this came Dampier to examine the north and west coasts, and to bestow a few more names; and in 1697, Vlaming to discover and name the Swan River. Then for a period of about eighty years Australia, or New Holland, was neglected by navigators, and only came into notice again when Captain Cook took possession of Botany Bay in 1770.

The Swan River Settlement was the germ of the colony now called Western Australia. In 1826 the then governor of New South Wales, with a desire for lateral expansion, sent a detachment of troops to occupy King George's Sound, which had been discovered and named some thirty years previously by the famous Vancouver. Following up this movement, Captain Stirling went in H.M.S. *Success* to spy out the land with a view to forming a Settlement. He anchored off the Swan River, and he and his officers went in boats as far up the river as they could get. Captain Stirling reported so favourably of the land on his return to Sydney, that the governor recommended the Home Government to form a Settlement there.

Thus it came to pass that, in 1829, Captain Stirling returned to the Swan River as Lieutenant-Governor, commissioned to form and control a new colony. Within a year, some forty vessels followed him, bringing a thousand settlers, with personal effects and cash estimated at nearly one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. This we may regard as the capital with which the colony was started. Its progress was slow, and marked by many mistakes. The first was the over-liberality of the Home Government in offering large tracts of land to settlers with small means, the result of which was that immense areas of the best land near the coast fell into the hands of persons who were both unable to manage it and unfit for the hardships of pioneer life. Some of these early settlers soon got disgusted, and left, but retained their titles to the land so foolishly ceded to them. The new settlers who followed were unable to obtain land in favourable localities, and thus had either to

travel far afield, or betake themselves to one of the other colonies. In this way fresh immigration was discouraged, and the population which did settle became scattered over such a wide area as to leave the colony for long without any cohesion.

For many years the colony made little progress. Capital was scanty, and labour scarce and very dear. Moreover, there was a difficulty in finding markets for their products, and the Swan River settlers altogether felt that their lines had not fallen in pleasant places. Then came the rush to the gold-fields of Victoria, which still further depreciated the chances of the western colony. Finally, the colonists petitioned to be made, what the other colonies were rebelling against—a *dépôt* for convicts. The Home Government very promptly and gladly agreed to make Western Australia a penal settlement; and for twenty years, ship after ship discharged the scum and rascality of Great Britain in the Swan River. When, in 1868, transportation was suspended, West Australia had absorbed about ten thousand convicts of various shades of criminality, which is just about one-fourth of the present population.

The original Swan River Settlement was only the south-west corner of the present colony. Western Australia now includes a good deal more than a third of the entire area of the Australian continent. Its coast-line is some three thousand five hundred miles in length; and its acreage is estimated at six hundred and seventy-eight million four hundred thousand acres, or one million and sixty thousand square miles. This colony is eleven times as big as Great Britain, and it has only a population of forty-two thousand—the population of a third-rate British town.

Will it ever be fit for more? That is the great question of the moment, and there is not much difficulty in answering it in the affirmative. It has taken the colony sixty years to attain its present extremely modest importance, while its neighbours to the east have been adding to their population by the hundred thousand, and to their wealth by the million. But West Australia has had an unhappy childhood and an unfortunate youth. There is no reason why she should not have a bright maturity in spite of the errors of her creators and the dubious antecedents of her pioneers.

In this great dominion of one million square miles there are several ranges of hills of considerable size and beauty; there are several rivers which irrigate, for at least a portion of the year, great stretches of fine country; there are vast forests of magnificent timber; there are mineral treasures that are only beginning to be revealed to the eager searchers; there are large tracts of land suitable for agriculture; there is an abundant supply of both temperate and tropical fruits; and there is, in the southern portion of the colony at any rate, a climate which is said to be the best in the world, and which is certainly not surpassed anywhere for salubrity.

The handful of forty-two thousand people—a population equal to only about one-hundredth part of what the next census will show the Australian continent to hold—have not done the utmost with their heritage; but they have done a great deal. They have constructed some four hundred and fifty miles of railway to connect

their chief towns, and to bring down the forest-products to the ports; they have erected some three thousand miles of telegraph; they contribute an annual public revenue of nearly four hundred thousand pounds; and they have built up an important export trade which amounts to nearly a million and a half sterling per annum. Not many years ago, Perth, the capital, was like a small sleepy English country town; now it is a 'city' of ten thousand inhabitants, with numerous fine buildings, half a dozen banks, two cathedrals, several churches, clubs, societies, and all the resources and luxuries of civilisation.

Near Perth there is a little community which is unique in colonial history. A short distance to the north of the capital, some Spanish monks of the order of St Benedict founded the settlement of New Norcia. There for many years they have devoted themselves to the reclamation of the aboriginal tribes, and under Bishop Salvado there is now a considerable company of natives, trained to useful and industrious occupations. These blacks have been taught by the Benedictines to till the soil, grow the vine, and reclaim the waste lands. The monks have educated them, made musicians of many of them, and have at the same time not stifled them by confinement, but have given them in place of their nomadic habits a taste for all outdoor athletic sports and exercises. This vigorous little community is a standing reproach, for it shows what might have been done for the Australian aborigines if they had been properly dealt with elsewhere. West Australia has a larger proportion of aboriginal natives than any other section of the continent, and it is good to know that the West Australians give considerable employment to these natives about the sheep-runs and farms. There are in this country many tribes which have never even been seen by white men; so it is impossible to tell what are now the numbers of this dusky race.

Of this enormous colony—enormous as to territory, although insignificant as to population—upon which the Imperial Parliament is about to confer the privilege of responsible government, very little is known by English people at home, and, indeed, not a great deal of information has been published. Perhaps the latest facts are those which have been communicated by the late Attorney-General of the colony, Mr A. P. Hensman, to the Colonial Institute.

Among the chief industries, perhaps we might say the chief industries, of the colony at present are sheep and cattle farming. These farms are found along the banks of most of the rivers in the southern portion of the country. There is some difference of opinion as to its agricultural capabilities; but Mr Hensman says that, although there are many parts where, owing to the sandy nature of the soil and the absence of water, farming cannot be carried on, yet there are numerous tracts well suited for wheat-growing. There does not, however, appear to be good reason for thinking that West Australia will ever rival her neighbour, South Australia, in the production of corn for export. At all events, some machinery will first have to be devised for the storage and distribution of water, if wheat-growing is to become a considerable industry. Even the most arid tracts have been made fertile by irrigation.

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For the growth of fruits of all kinds the capacity of West Australia is remarkable. In the south, the vine, the orange, the fig, and the olive grow in perfection; and the grapes are said to be only equalled by those of English hot-houses. Any fruit of the temperate zone will attain perfection there. The distance is too great, probably, for any hope of market for these fruits in Europe; but there is one possible industry in the preserving of them. There is another in the making of wine, and the day is, perhaps, not far distant when West Australian vintages will be familiar in England. Wine, in fact, is now, and has been for some years, made in the colony, although none of it has yet found its way 'home.' On the Darling Hills, near Perth, there are many flourishing vineyards; and there are several other districts as well adapted for vine-growing.

One great source of the wealth of the colony so far has been its forests. These are so enormous and continuous, that the southern portion of West Australia has sometimes been described as one vast forest. At one time the chief export from these forests was sandal-wood, in the shipping of which fragrant material to China considerable fortunes were made. This trade, however, is not nearly so important and so lucrative as it once was. For one thing, the sandal-wood tree requires careful replanting, and the colonists were only bent on securing that which they saw before them, without providing for the future, so that they have now to go farther and farther afield for it. This of course adds to the expense, and reduces the profit; while, also, the prices obtainable in China have been steadily receding. The export now averages in value only about thirty thousand pounds a year. It is an industry which may be revived by cultivation.

At present, the most valuable forest-product is the Jarrah—a species of eucalyptus—which rises straight from the ground to a height of a hundred feet without a branch, and which has a girth of from twenty to thirty feet at the base. The durability of the timber of this tree is said to surpass that of any other known wood. When carefully selected and cut while the sap is least active, the timber is absolutely impervious to the borings of insects, and it has remarkable resistance to the action of water. It is thus eminently adapted, and is being largely used, for jetties, piles, railway-sleepers, and the frames and planking of ships. Although very hard, it is used also in the colony for the flooring and rafters of houses, and for furniture. One thing in its favour for building purposes is that it is one of the least inflammable of known woods.

As this valuable tree is known to abound in West Australia over an area equal to the whole of Great Britain, it will be seen that the forest wealth is very great, and it is of special importance that it exists in localities within moderate distance of the coast and harbours.

Another valuable tree is the Karri, also a species of eucalyptus. This tree grows in the humid country near the rivers and towards the coast, and is the largest but one of the eucalyptus tribe of the Australian continent. Specimens have been found over four hundred feet in height, and stems have been measured three hundred feet clean up to the first limb. The stems are

slender where the trees grow close together, and one of two hundred feet high may have a stem not above a foot in diameter. But where growing apart, they attain enormous girth; and one has been measured with a circumference of sixty feet at the base.

From well-grown specimens of the Karri, timber as much as twelve feet wide can be obtained. The wood is elastic and durable, although not very easily worked, and is splendid for shafting and planking. Baron Mueller has introduced this tree both into Victoria and into Europe, because of its easy culture, its quick growth, and its valuable timber. West Australia has millions of acres of it.

Next to its forests, the colony has heretofore relied most on its pearl-fisheries. These are conducted on the north and west coasts, and employ large fleets of boats. The pearls are well known in England, and the value of pearls and pearl-shells exported has steadily increased until it is now about one hundred thousand pounds a year.

For some years West Australians have been envious of the gold-mines of their colonial neighbours; but now they have found gold for themselves. In the northern part of the colony, gold has been discovered in the district called Kimberley. It is a long way from ports and civilisation, and there is also a deficiency of water for crushing and other purposes. But already a railway is projected, and the government are industriously boring for water. Gold-mining is now actively carried on at Kimberley and in other places; and although many of those who went with the first rush when the discovery was reported, returned in disgust because of the hardships of the life and the inconveniences of the situation, there is no doubt that West Australia is now to be added to the list of regular gold-producers. There have been native traditions of gold-mines for ages, and it is possible that the deposits are very much greater than is yet even surmised. Anything seems possible in such an enormous, and as yet practically unexplored territory.

Of even more importance is the recent discovery of coal on the upper part of the Irwin River. The reports as yet are meagre, and there is also a belief that coal exists in the Kimberley district. If the expectations are realised, then West Australia may well indulge in dreams of prosperity, for, apart from her own proper needs—and there is native copper, lead, and iron to be smelted—her shores are the first that are touched, or sighted, by outward-going steamers from Europe, and the last to be left on the homeward voyage. The ports of this colony are from one to two weeks nearer to us than those of any other of the Australian colonies.

Such are a few of the characteristics and resources of what some people are inclined to regard as the coming colony. For the rest, the climate is such that Albany may one day become a favourite and fashionable health-resort for British and Anglo-Indian invalids.

Albany stands at the head of the inner harbour of King George's Sound—a vast natural harbour, which is destined to be of Imperial importance. It is just round the south-west corner of Australia, in the very line of the great trade of

the world with the colonies. It is a spacious and safe anchorage-ground, naturally and geographically adapted as a harbour of refuge, a coaling-station, and a rendezvous for the navies which are being created for Australian defences.

But it is plain that West Australia cannot go on and prosper without more people. She has plenty of room, but she has not all the attractions for ordinary colonists that other parts of Australia have. Those who go must not expect to find a land flowing with milk and honey, or to fill their pockets in a morning with gold nuggets. But those who can rough it, who have patience and perseverance, and who have the enterprise to beat out new tracks, and who have a small capital to start with, may do well. It is certainly a land of great natural wealth, waiting for development, and those who aid in the development will share in the reward. It is not, however, a land for indiscriminate emigration.

DUMARESQ'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER XXL.—AN ANXIOUS MOMENT.

A FEW hours later, on that terrible Sunday—the last before the final disaster at Khartoum—Sir Austen found himself in the great square of the town, in front of the Governor's house, where a starving crowd of natives was already gathered, eager to hear the last news of the deliberation going on inside the Palace. Sir Austen had been relieved for the time from his dangerous and difficult post at the Bourré Gate, and had strolled inward into the city to learn for himself what hopes the Governor still had as to their chances of holding out till the army of rescue arrived to reinforce them.

It's wonderful how callous people get at last to the dangers of a siege, when once they're in the midst of it. The constant rain of bullets from every side passes absolutely unnoticed. Men cross open spaces under fire without seeming to observe it. Even a shell exploding causes far less commotion than the fall of an omnibus-horse would cause in Regent Street. So Sir Austen strolled on carelessly, undeterred by the distant thud of firing, through those covered streets, overhung with matting to keep off the heat of the mid-day sun, and past the hungry blacks who peered now and again from darkling doorways in the wall, greeting the English officer as he strode by with a military salute in true Soudanese fashion. Sir Austen saluted in return, and stepped on briskly. But the square, when he reached it, was alive with an eager throng of superior natives, both soldiers and civilians, in every possible stage of weariness and misery. A long siege had left its mark on all. Famine stared visibly from every face. The gaunt Egyptians looked gaunter than ever: the stalwart negroes were worn to shadows. Among them the officer's quick eye was not long in picking out once more the still burly figure of his Irish friend Considine.

'What's up?' Sir Austen asked with considerable curiosity, forcing his way not without some difficulty through the buzzing throng. 'A deputation to Gordon?'

'Ye've hit it,' Considine answered lightly, with his accustomed easy devil-may-care expression. 'The precise game. A dozen of the chief niggers are in conference with the Governor, and they want him to surrender at discretion this very morning. But they don't know Gordon. And from what I can guess of these fellows' lingo, I fancy Gordon don't see it in the same light as they do. They seem to me to be grumbling in their own tongue—which is a grand one for the purpose—and I can certainly answer for it that we've all of us got a right to, for we're confounded hungry.'

As he spoke, an Arab a step or two in front of them turned round to them with an intelligent air and smiled. Considine was the first to recognise who it was among the confused crowd of similar white oriental dresses. 'Why, man, hanged if it isn't your cousin again,' he cried, with a sudden look at Sir Austen. 'Ah, but he's a splendid Arab! The devil himself wouldn't know him from a born Mussulman. —Linnell, ye rascal, come here and tell us what the bother's all about. Ye can understand these niggers' unconscionable lingo. Tell us what the dickens the black fellows are haggling over.'

'Hush,' Linnell answered, coming over to them with an almost reverential air. 'Hush! He's going to speak. Let's hear what he says. I'll translate it all for you as well as I can afterwards.'

Something in the tone of his voice compelled attention. Considine and Sir Austen looked up at once, and saw standing on the steps of that whitewashed Palace the well-known figure of a tall and commanding-looking man, in white European uniform and dark red fez, that showed off to the utmost advantage the chastened strength and majesty of his sunburnt face and grizzled gray moustaches. A buzz ran wave-like through the assembled crowd—a whispered buzz of 'Gordon! Gordon!' The Governor raised his right hand for a moment, palm outward, as if to bespeak silence; and all at once a sudden stillness fell like magic even upon that motley crowd of noisy chattering orientals. One second they surged like a summer sea; then they looked up eagerly. Every man held his face upturned to hear, as Kashim Elmoos, Gordon's most trusted native officer, called out loudly in Arabic: 'The Governor will address you.' But for some minutes the Governor himself only glanced round impressively with his deep blue eyes: his silence and his look, all pity and resolution, seemed well-nigh as eloquent in their way as his soldierly language.

The crowd waited patiently, hanging upon his lips. Then Gordon, steadying himself with his hand on Kashim Elmoos's shoulder—for he was ill that day, and had been up all night making the round of the ramparts—gazed about him compassionately on that silent sea of eager black faces, and began to speak in rapid and fluent but very clear and distinct Arabic. Neither Sir Austen nor Considine could understand one word he said; but his winning smile, his cheery voice, his resolute manner, his quick cadences of emotion as he passed in turn from chiding to exhortation, made them almost able to follow in rough outline the general sense of what he was driving at. As for the straining

mob of terrified orientals, they hung upon his words in breathless silence, and stroked their chins, muttering now and then in concert, 'Allah is great. Gordon says well. He has faith to shame us. With Allah's help, we shall hold out yet till hope comes of deliverance.'

But the Governor's face belied his confidence. As he went on with his speech, even in that dire extremity, some electric spark from the great man's heart seemed to run now and again through the entire assembly, so wonderfully did he inspire them all with the sense of personal devotion. They thrilled responsive. At one point, the Governor's voice sank low and musical. 'What's he saying to them now?' Considine asked in an almost inaudible whisper of Linnell, unable any longer to repress his curiosity.

'He's telling them he feels it all, not for himself—not for his reputation—not even for England—but for his people's sake—these poor sheep of Soudanese, whom he has tried so hard to save and to benefit. If all is lost, it is for them that he grieves over it. Four long days and nights he has never slept nor closed his eye; he has gone round the posts incessantly, and personally encouraged his starved and wearied soldiers to stand firm till help arrives from Wolsley. The question of food, he says, has worn him to a shadow. He is hungry for his people. But all will yet go well. If they will but hold out for three days longer, Stewart's troops will be here: and for his part, come what may, he will never, never, never consent to surrender. They may give up the town if they like; that is *their* lookout; but he and we and Kashim Elmoos will die fighting to the last for God and duty.'

'Hooray!' Considine cried out enthusiastically at the top of his voice. 'And so say all of us, too, General. We won't give way. We're with you! we're with you.'

Gordon looked down with a placid childlike smile in the direction of the suddenly interrupting voice, and added in English, loud and clear: 'My determination is unshaken. I will hold out to the end. England will never allow us to perish. But even if she does, we must do our duty.'

Sir Austen pressed his way up through the surging crowd, now loosed in speech once more, and eagerly discussing this last deliverance of their Governor's. 'I have news for him,' he murmured to Linnell, as they pressed forward together through the wearied throng. 'I believe help is nearer even than he supposes. We took a man prisoner this morning near the Bourré Gate, trying to make his way as close as he could, as a spy. From what Abdul Ahmed, who examined him, tells me, I think he can be relied upon for giving truthful information.'

They reached the steps, and moved slowly up to where Gordon himself had now taken his seat in a wicker chair on the platform of the Palace. Occasional bullets still whizzed past them with a whir; but the Governor nevertheless received them with that genial smile which never forsook him even in the last extremity. 'What goes at the gate, Linnell?' he asked, grasping Sir Austen's hand hard, and looking down into his very soul with those clear blue eyes of his. 'All well towards Bourré?'

'All well, as yet, I trust,' Sir Austen answered, trying his best to imitate his great leader's cheeriness. 'But we expect a determined assault to be made before long. We took a dervish prisoner this morning in the outer ditch, attempting, as I believe, to scale the rampart and communicate with Faragh'—

Gordon's eyes gleamed steely at the treacherous Pasha's name. 'Very likely!' he answered, with a quietly contemptuous air. 'Faragh can't be trusted. I made that man, and I know now, if he dared, he would willingly betray me. He has a cur's nature, I fear. But I'm not afraid of him. If we die, at least we have done our duty. Though even now, two hundred men would be enough to save us. Two hundred Englishmen, of Probyn or Burnaby's sort. With their help, we could hold out for another twelvemonth.—Well: how about your prisoner?'

Sir Austen smiled back at that calm heroic face of a great man struggling with a sea of adversity. 'My prisoner tells us,' he went on, in a very quiet voice, 'that the Mahdi has news of a severe defeat of his northern detachment on Saturday week by Stewart's troops at Abu Klea. He understands that Stewart himself is wounded or dead, but that his column has succeeded in reaching Metannell. The dervish tells us that the army of relief made a reconnaissance in force at Metannell on Wednesday, aided by our four steamers, which he seems to think have effected a junction with them. And he says that in the Mahdi's camp every one is of opinion an assault must be made not later than Tuesday on all available points, for fear the army of relief should arrive by Wednesday or Thursday.'

The Governor listened to this exciting news with profound interest. 'My own information looks the same way,' he murmured with that imperturbable calm of a brave spirit. 'Depend upon it, we are only three or four days off now from our deliverance. I have wrestled with this trouble in prayer, and it is passing away. It is passing away, I feel certain.—But which way it will pass away, we can't tell yet. My grief is all for my poor starved people. I believe our steamers must really have met Stewart's detachment. But that makes our danger all the greater for the moment. Everything depends upon the next four days. The Mahdi's too good a strategist, you may be sure, not to know his one chance of success lies in preventing a junction. The nearer help comes to us, the more eager the enemy will be to hasten his assault. He'll attack us to-night, I believe. He'll attack before morning.—I must see your prisoner, Sir Austen. Where have you left him?'

'At the Bourré Gate,' Sir Austen answered respectfully, 'in charge of Ali Ismail.'

At the words, the General, like a wounded man, sprang from his seat, astounded. 'In charge of Ali Ismail,' he cried with an incredulous air. 'Why, Colonel, you surprise me! The man's a spy, of course, who came near on purpose, hoping to be taken, that he might communicate with Faragh! And you've left him in charge of one of Faragh's own most intimate officers! Why, what could you have been thinking about? In a man less experienced and less trustworthy than yourself, I should be inclined to call this culpable negligence! Depend upon it, the fellow

has a message from the Mahdi. By this time, he's arranged things comfortably with Faragh, no doubt. And the worst of it is, we don't know whom to trust. We must go down at once and try to prevent any further mischief.'

Sir Austen clapped his hand to his head in horror. 'Great heavens,' he cried with a sudden burst of enlightenment, 'I must be mad! I never even thought of it!'

The General, never chiding him, moved down the steps with a resolute air. 'This is bad news,' he said quietly. 'Very bad news indeed. I've heard none worse through all this day of trial. I distrust Faragh; and I don't know how many of his subordinates may be implicated with him. If we had only the enemy to deal with, we might hold out for weeks; but with traitors in the camp—starvation and treachery to cope with at once—God alone knows now what may happen next to us. And when we fall, they will treat my poor people as these wretches treated the defenceless souls in Berber.'

MODERN NAVAL ENGAGEMENTS.

IRONCLAD FIGHTS.

SINCE the naval operations during the American Civil War opened the eyes of Europe to the necessity for ironclad or armoured war-ships, and the consequent need for heavy guns, there have been few opportunities of testing these modern monsters by the ordeal of real warfare; yet naval actions between armoured vessels, or actions in which armoured vessels were engaged, have been more numerous than is generally supposed. The famous fight between the 'Merrimac' and the 'Monitor' was the death-blow to the old order of things.

The 'Monitor,' built by Captain Ericsson, was a turret ship, with a single turret, carrying two guns, throwing one-hundred-and-eighty-pound shot. The armour of the turret was eight inches in thickness; while the side-armour was five inches thick; she had, however, a freeboard of about a foot only. The 'Merrimac' might be described as an impromptu ironclad. Among the vessels burnt or sunk by the Federals on their evacuation of Norfolk was the wooden steam frigate 'Merrimac.' It was raised by the Confederates and cut down to the water-line; both ends were decked over; and on the centre portion was built a casemate, something like the roof of a house. The walls of the casemate were of oak, two feet thick, faced by two layers of iron plating, four inches thick. She was armed with ten guns of various calibres. Both vessels steamed about five knots, and were utterly unseaworthy.

On the 8th of March 1862, the 'Virginia,' as the 'Merrimac' had been rechristened, made her appearance among the enemy's fleet, and immediately began to give them a taste of her quality. The 'Cumberland,' a thirty-gun frigate, was rammed and sunk with startling rapidity; the 'Congress,' a fifty-gun frigate, was driven ashore and burned; and another frigate was also driven ashore. By this time night had fallen, and the 'Virginia' rested on her laurels, expecting to finish her work on the morrow. Beyond having her loose hamper shot away, she was not damaged;

but she had left her ram, which had been insecurely fastened on, in the side of the 'Cumberland.'

But the next morning an antagonist appeared on the scene in the shape of the little 'Monitor.' The 'Virginia' had met her match. Both vessels immediately prepared for action, and the first fight between ironclads took place. The result was indecisive. The combat, a fierce artillery duel, continued for four hours. The distance between the combatants ranged from half a mile to close range, yet the armour of neither was pierced; and although both were badly battered, they did not sustain any vital injury. At last, as if by mutual consent, they separated, their crews being utterly worn out. It is related that during the fight the crew manning one of the guns of the 'Virginia' were found standing at ease. On the officer in command being asked why he was not firing, he replied that 'gunpowder was precious, and he could do her [the 'Monitor'] as much damage by snapping his fingers at her every two and a half minutes!' Although a drawn battle between the actual antagonists, yet the 'Monitor' succeeded in its object, the saving of the remainder of the Federal fleet. This was the only fight of any consequence either the 'Virginia' or the 'Monitor' was engaged in.

Next to the action between the 'Virginia' and the 'Monitor,' that between the 'Alabama' and the 'Kearsarge' has the most interest for us; if, indeed, taking place as it did at our own doors, it does not take precedence. It illustrated in a graphic manner the value of defensive armour. The 'Alabama' was a barque-rigged wooden propeller, carrying eight guns, one of which was a rifled hundred-pounder. After two years of depredation, in which she inflicted incalculable injury upon the shipping of the United States, she repaired to Cherbourg in the beginning of June 1864 to refit. A few days afterwards, the 'Kearsarge,' which had been in pursuit of the 'Alabama' for some time, also arrived off the port. Captain Semmes of the 'Alabama,' partly from a feeling of chivalry, and partly, no doubt, from a feeling of superiority in his armaments, determined to go out and fight his antagonist. The 'Kearsarge,' like the 'Alabama,' was a wooden propeller, but carried only seven guns. Unknown to Captain Semmes, however, she had been strengthened in a remarkable manner. Like the knights of old, she was encased in a suit of chain-mail. Amidships, on both sides, she was protected by a chain cable placed up and down from the rail to the water's edge, the whole being covered over with a thin planking, which completely concealed the armour beneath. About ten o'clock on Sunday forenoon, 19th June 1864, the 'Alabama' left Cherbourg harbour, and came up with the 'Kearsarge' about seven miles from land. When the latter was about a mile distant on her starboard, the 'Alabama' opened fire. Firing now proceeded rapidly on both sides. The 'Alabama' had pivoted her guns to starboard, and in order to keep their respective broadsides bearing, they fought in a circle, both vessels steaming round a common centre with a distance varying from a quarter to half a mile. In about half an hour the firing became very hot, and the 'Alabama' began to suffer. She was hulled several times,

and a number of her men killed, while her shell in return did the 'Kearsarge' little damage. After the lapse of about an hour, the 'Alabama' was in a sinking condition, the enemy's shell having exploded in her sides and between decks, making large apertures, through which the water rushed with great rapidity. At last she hoisted sail to get away; but the 'Kearsarge' was laid across her bows, threatening to rake her; the 'Alabama' thereupon surrendered, but sank a few minutes afterwards. A few of her crew were rescued by the boats of the 'Kearsarge,' but most of them by tugs and pleasure-vessels, which had gathered round to witness the combat. The 'Kearsarge' was little the worse of the encounter owing to the protection her armour afforded. It is possible that if Captain Semmes had known the 'Kearsarge' was partially armoured, he would not have been in such a hurry to come out and fight, or he might at least have taken the same precautionary measures.

Two years afterwards, the war between Italy and Austria gave the world an opportunity of witnessing for the first time a general naval engagement in which ironclads were engaged on both sides. Owing to the conflicting accounts of the contending parties, it is almost impossible to give a perfectly accurate account of the battle; but the following narrative, compiled from the various reports of it which appeared in the *Times*, will give a tolerably clear idea of the main facts. On the 20th of July 1866 the Italian fleet was attacked by the Austrians off the island of Lissa, which the Italians had endeavoured to capture the day previous. The Italian squadron, which was under the command of Admiral Persano, consisted of eleven ironclads, six screw frigates, two paddle-wheel corvettes, three small gunboats, and several small steamers. Among the ironclads were the 'Re d'Italia,' a fine ironclad frigate; and the 'Affondatore,' a powerful ram of the newest construction, carrying the admiral's flag. The Austrian fleet consisted of seven ironclad frigates, the 'Kaiser,' a wooden three-decker of ninety guns, several frigates and small vessels—altogether about twenty-three. The Austrian admiral, Tegenhoffer, had hoisted his flag on the 'Ferdinand Max.' On the morning of the day mentioned both fleets formed themselves into order of battle, in two lines, with the most powerful vessels in front; and the Austrians advanced to the attack. When about two hundred and fifty yards distant, fire was opened on the Italians both from sea and land. They immediately replied, and the firing soon became appalling. Several of the Italian ironclads closed with the 'Kaiser,' evidently mistaking her for the Austrian flagship. The 'Re de Portogallo' tried to ram her, and struck into her with such force as to carry away her bowsprit, foremast, and a large part of the prow, the figure-head falling on board the Italian vessel. The 'Kaiser,' disabled, on fire, with her chimney fallen across her deck, managed eventually to escape with great difficulty. Meanwhile, the Austrian admiral, seeing the danger in which the 'Kaiser' was placed, came to the rescue, and made a fierce attack on the 'Re d'Italia.' He directed his own vessel, the 'Ferdinand Max,' full speed on the Italian ironclad, which, with its rudder disabled and already damaged at the water-line, was stove completely in, and was engulfed almost

immediately. It is said that as the ship was going down, half a battalion of marines stationed in the tops sent a parting volley on the deck of the Austrian flagship, killing and wounding eighty men. While this tragedy was proceeding, the Italian ironclad gunboat 'Palestro' caught fire, and presently blew up; her crew refusing to surrender, were blown up with their vessel. The combat raged for two hours, during which the fleets forced their way through one another and changed places, when they turned round and prepared to renew the battle. The Italian squadron was still holding its ground, and the Austrians were waiting to renew the attack. Meanwhile, the distance between the fleets widened; the Austrians fell back; and the Italians, after waiting on the spot until nightfall, made for Ancona. Although the Italians claimed the victory because they remained in possession of the field of battle; yet, losing two of their best ironclads, and being foiled in their object—the capture of Lissa—the victory must be given to the Austrians. The fact also that the Italian admiral, Persano, was in the following year expelled the service, gives a certain indication in favour of this decision.

A period of eleven years now elapses ere the next naval engagement takes place. On the 29th May 1877 was fought the engagement between the British cruisers 'Shah' and 'Amethyst' and the Peruvian ironclad 'Huascar.' In one of the periodical revolutions of Peru the 'Huascar' had been seized by the rebels, and had put to sea on a roving expedition. This was all very well, if she had not interfered with British mail-steamer and forcibly taken coal from an English barque. Vice-admiral De Horsey determined to put a summary stop to these piratical proceedings, and set sail after her with the 'Shah' and 'Amethyst,' and came up with the 'Huascar' off the town of Ilo. The 'Shah' and the 'Amethyst' were unarmoured cruisers, the one of twenty-six guns, and the other of fourteen guns of various calibres. The 'Huascar,' built at Birkenhead, was a turret ram, with turret armour five and a half inches in thickness, and a belt of four and a half inches. She was armed with two ten-inch three-hundred-pounders in the turret, and two forty-pounders on her maindeck. The officers of the 'Huascar' were surprised at the appearance of the English vessels; but they were more surprised at what followed. The 'Shah' fired a gun for the 'Huascar' to lay-to, and sent a boat on board with the message that Admiral De Horsey gave the 'Huascar' just two minutes to surrender in the name of the Queen. This was resented by the rebel government, which was on board, as an unwarrantable interference in a purely family quarrel; and they prepared for the fray. The English opened fire at six hundred yards, the 'Huascar' immediately replying with her three-hundred-pounders. The 'Amethyst' tried to rake the ram, but failed. The 'Shah' now fired her broadsides, which were discharged by electricity, and in a few minutes the 'Huascar's' deck was cleared of everything but masts, turret, and smoke-stack. The 'Huascar' continued to fire at regular intervals; but the gunnery was bad. After an hour and a half the 'Amethyst' was set on fire amidships, and steamed out of action. The 'Huascar' now attempted to ram the 'Shah';

but this was prevented by good handling. The Peruvian was hit several times by three-hundred-pound shot, but only one completely pierced her armour. She now adopted new tactics, first advancing on the 'Shah' and then on the 'Amethyst'; but ramming was again prevented by good management and superior speed. After the battle had lasted for three hours, the 'Huascar' slowly retired, a shell from the 'Amethyst' having destroyed the primers of the turret guns. She headed towards land, but the enemy did not attempt to follow. She escaped in the darkness, and it was well for her she did, for about 10 p.m. a steam-launch from the 'Shah' was sent into the port of Ilo with a torpedo to blow her up; and it was by the merest chance a peaceful trader escaped destruction, being mistaken for the 'Huascar.' This encounter was considered a drawn battle. It is remarkable as being the only one in which British war-ships have been engaged since the introduction of ironclads.

In 1879 the 'Huascar' again came on the scene. In that year war broke out between Chili and Peru. On the 21st of May the 'Huascar' and the 'Independencia,' a broadside ironclad of twenty-two guns, fell in with the Chilean wooden corvette 'Esmeralda' of twelve guns and the gunboat 'Covadonga' off the port of Iquique. Firing immediately commenced between the 'Huascar' and the 'Esmeralda,' and was kept up for two hours; but as it was at long range, neither sustained much damage. Captain Grau of the 'Huascar' at length determined to bring the engagement to an issue by ramming the 'Esmeralda.' She was struck on the port side, but received little damage. Grau rammed again on the starboard bow, this time with more success; a hole was made, through which the water poured and flooded the engine-room, putting out the fires. The powder-magazine was also flooded, and the men there drowned. These two failures to sink the 'Esmeralda' were owing to the engines of the 'Huascar' being reversed too soon before striking, thus diminishing the force of the blow. Although the Chilean now lay at the mercy of her opponent, she would not surrender. The 'Huascar' now charged a third time, hitting her in the starboard side, at the same time firing into her; and the 'Esmeralda' foundered almost immediately. The fight had lasted altogether four hours. The 'Huascar' was little injured, the 'Esmeralda's' shot failing to pierce her armour, although her bows were somewhat damaged by the third charge. Meanwhile affairs had not been progressing so favourably with her consort. She had given chase to the 'Covadonga,' which, being of lighter draught, escaped into shallow water, and the 'Independencia' heedlessly following, ran aground. The gunboat then took up a position where the guns of the ironclad could not bear, and pounded her at short range, until the 'Huascar,' having finished with the 'Esmeralda,' came to the rescue, when the gunboat made off and escaped.

On the 8th of October 1879 was fought the engagement in which the 'Huascar' changed hands. The Chileans had bent all their energies on capturing the waspish little ironclad, which had kept their coasts in a continual state of terror, and had done them a good deal of injury since

the commencement of the war. On the morning of the day mentioned, after a chase of some days, the 'Huascar' found herself cornered by six of the enemy's vessels—in fact, nearly the whole of the Chilean fleet, the most powerful of them being the sister-ships 'Cochrane' and 'Blanco,' two of the most powerful ironclads of the day, each carrying six twelve-ton guns. Grau, the commander of the 'Huascar,' finding himself caught, determined to try to make a dash through the enemy's line, trusting to his superior speed to get away. The first shots were fired by the 'Huascar' at the 'Cochrane' at a distance of two miles; the first three fell short; but the fourth pierced the 'Cochrane's' armour. The Chilean ironclad now opened fire, and its first shot deranged the revolving apparatus of the 'Huascar's' turret. The antagonists having now closed considerably, the 'Huascar' made several attempts to ram the 'Cochrane,' but failed, owing to the agility of the latter. The two vessels now being close together, an incessant fire of small-arms and machine guns was kept up on both sides. Presently a shell from the 'Cochrane' struck the conning tower of the 'Huascar,' destroying it and killing Admiral Grau, who was inside. Four officers were killed or wounded in rapid succession immediately on taking command. The 'Blanco' now coming up and joining in the fray, the Peruvian was soon almost disabled; one of her guns also being disabled by a shell entering the turret. Unsuccessful attempts were now made on both sides to end the fight by ramming. The 'Huascar's' Gatling had by this time been silenced by the Nordenfelts of the Chilean ironclads. At last, after an hour and a half's fighting, the 'Huascar' surrendered. She was then in a sinking condition, hulled in all directions, steering apparatus gone, and swept of everything but her turret and smoke-stack. The 'Cochrane,' owing to the thickness of her armour, (six inches) was not much injured, most of the 'Huascar's' shot failing to penetrate. When the immense odds against the 'Huascar' are considered, it must be granted that this was one of the most desperate and plucky actions ever fought.

Although engaged in desultory skirmishes under her new flag with her old companions during the remainder of the war, this was the last serious action in which the 'Huascar' was engaged. She has survived to the present day, and took part in the recent Chilean revolution. Her checkered career, in spite of her insignificance, has gained for her a world-wide notoriety.

The history of ironclad warfare is nearly told. The last occasion anything of the kind happened was in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. The Turkish fleet was so powerful as to overawe the Russian fleet, and no engagements took place, although there were one or two torpedo attacks on Turkish monitors in the Danube. One of these was a night attack by six Russian torpedo boats on three Turkish monitors at Sulina; but the Turks, having been galvanised into life by Hobart Pasha, were on the alert, and the torpedo boats were beaten off with a loss of two of their number.

The newest type of ironclad, as the 'Trafalgar' and the 'Nile,' or even the 'Thunderer' and 'Devastation,' have been wholly untried in war-

fare, and how they would behave is a matter of conjecture; but enough has been related to dispel a somewhat popular belief that one well-directed shot would send an ironclad, like an old kettle with a hole in it, direct to the bottom.

With the introduction of ironclads, however, there has been developed an entirely new mode of attack—the use of the ram. Where ramming has taken place, it has almost always been successful; and to the cases we have narrated might be added two of unintentional ramming. The first was the ramming of the 'Vanguard' by the 'Iron Duke.' The 'Vanguard' was struck on the starboard quarter between the main and mizzen masts four feet below the water-line, and sank in an hour. The second case was a much more serious one, inasmuch as two hundred and eighty-four men lost their lives. This was the sinking of the 'Grosser Kurfürst' by the 'Konig Wilhelm' in the German naval manoeuvres in 1878. The 'Grosser Kurfürst' was struck nearly amidships, and part of her side ripped completely off; she sank almost immediately. Although ramming is fatal, it can easily be avoided when the intended victim is under control; but this is not always the case. It undoubtedly makes modern naval engagements more 'dangerous,' if such an expression may be used.

A BURMESE GENONE.

CHAPTER II.

'THEN, Farnwood, to put the matter in a nutshell, you owe your life to the girl?'

'I owe her my life,' replied Mr Farnwood with grave emphasis.

It was literally true. When, at the last moment, that dacoit stopped to make his final cut, Mah Mee had thrust out her arm and intercepted the blow, which, had it reached its mark, must have ended George Farnwood's earthly career. As it was, the girl's arm was as nearly as possible severed below the elbow; and she was still, three weeks after the fight, in so weak a condition that her recovery was far from certain.

Mr Farnwood himself had received several deep flesh-wounds, and was under orders to come to Rangoon on 'sick-leave' as soon as he could travel. Mr Anderson, the officer who was to relieve him, had brought up the force of police sent in reply to his message asking for help, and this gentleman had been at Shwaydoungyee ever since.

The two were sitting in the veranda, whose floor bore dark suggestive stains no scrubbing could remove. Mr Anderson never forgot the sight it presented on that morning when he arrived so opportunely; to quote the expression he used in his official report, the place 'looked and stank like a shambles.' And he could not look upon one corner without seeing a vision of George Farnwood sitting blood-drenched and faint against the wall, with the head of the unconscious Burmese girl resting in his lap.

'You will have to do something handsome for her,' remarked Mr Anderson, 'poor little body. She is a pretty girl, as Burmese beauties go.'

'I shall marry her,' answered Mr Farnwood briefly.

His friend screwed up his mouth and shook his head dubiously. 'A fellow can't well overpay the woman who has saved his life at such cost to herself,' he said. 'But to marry her! Think what it means, my dear man. You condemn yourself to life in this awful country for ever, and to social ostracism besides. Moreover, you would put an effectual stop to your advancement in the police. I'd think very carefully before I took such a step as that, Farnwood. The life Miss Mah Mee has saved wouldn't be worth living, if you repaid your debt by making her your wife.'

George Farnwood had thought the matter over very carefully; indeed, during these last three weeks, which he had spent on his bed, it had seldom been absent from his mind for an hour. He had learned from Mah Mee's own lips how she had come to be in the bungalow that night when every one else had fled to the jungle. She confessed that she lingered behind when the others were hurrying away, and had at last returned and concealed herself in the bushes behind the *thannah*. She heard the dacoits' cry, and watched Mr Farnwood go out with the policemen. When she saw him fall, she could not move for a minute; but as soon as he got up, she knew he would go to the bungalow, and went in by the back way to meet him there. It was needless to ask what motive had inspired the girl; and a thousand times, George Farnwood bitterly reproached himself for having permitted her to stay. By doing so he had laid himself under an obligation he could meet in one way only; and he made up his mind to repay Mah Mee's devoted love by making her his wife. He must do it, though every fibre revolted against the idea. The subtle instinct of race, unconquerable in himself, wholly wanting in the girl, forbade his feeling for her more than an indulgent liking such as he might have entertained for an intelligent dog; and even that was now strangled by the debt she had forced him to incur. Mr Anderson had expressed in the plainest language the terrible bonds such a marriage would rivet upon him; but it was too late to harp upon its drawbacks now. He had given his word, and would not recall it; for as soon as he could walk so far, he had gone to the hut where Mah Mee lay and had promised to marry her.

'I am going away in a few days,' he had told her; 'but when you are well again, I shall send for you to come to me. I am going to make you my wife.'

And Mah Mee had acknowledged the words which it had been the dream of her life to hear, with a simple: 'Yes, my lord!'

Shwaydoungyee had risen phoenix-like from its ashes, and save that the huts were cleaner, it presented much the same appearance as it had done before Boh Tsine's memorable visit. The runaway policemen had not felt themselves equal to resuming their duty in the Imperial service, and had deputed Mounk Louk to return and convey their 'resignation' to Mr Farnwood. The sergeant, trusting that his fifteen years' good service would save him from punishment, had undertaken the task; and was promptly

placed under arrest until the pleasure of the authorities should be made known. Mr Farnwood had spoken his mind very freely to Mung Louk, and had promised that no effort on his part should be wanting to obtain smart punishment for his cowardice.

In view of the pending war with Upper Burma, the young officer was keenly anxious to report himself as fit for duty again; and the first step in that direction was to obtain proper medical attendance. Mr Anderson's rough-and-ready surgery had patched him up sufficiently to face the journey; and a day or two after his visit to Mah Mee, he was on his way down the river, bound for Maulmain, where he would find means of crossing to Rangoon. He had intended to proceed direct to the hospital on his arrival at the latter station; but, much to his surprise and gratification, he was received at the wharf by the chief of his department, Colonel Grane, who refused to hear of any such arrangement.

'My wife has got a room ready for you,' he insisted. 'The doctor is waiting at my house to take you in hand, and there is the *dhooly* to convey you up to cantonments.—Come along; Mrs Grane and my daughter are going to nurse you.'

An Indian hospital is not an exhilarating place of residence for a convalescent, and Mr Farnwood felt that for every reason it would be well to accept the Colonel's warmly pressed invitation. Accordingly, he allowed himself to be placed in the canvas-covered stretcher or *dhooly*, and was carried up to his chief's house in cantonments without more ado.

Once fairly installed there, he could not but congratulate himself on his good fortune in finding such a haven. Mrs Grane's kindness and care would alone have made it a pleasure to be her patient-guest; but when he was allowed to exchange his bed for a sofa in the veranda, and Miss Mabel Grane took over charge of him, he looked forward almost with regret to the day when he should no longer be able to pose as an invalid.

But that day, if the doctor was to be believed, was a long way distant yet. His strength had been sapped by loss of blood, and the slightest exertion was strictly prohibited. Indeed, had not Colonel Grane supported him in his petition to be allowed to remain in Burma, Dr Ritchie would have summoned a 'Medical Board' and packed him off to England on six months' sick-leave by the first homeward-bound steamer.

'The man will fret himself into fever if you insist, doctor,' said Colonel Grane. 'He doesn't want to leave the country just now, and very rightly. He is marked for promotion; and it would be folly for him to go away home while there's every chance of the Upper Province being annexed; besides the Government wants all its best men on the spot.'

'It goes against my conscience,' answered the doctor doubtfully. 'However, there's a great deal in what you say. And after all, the cold weather is coming on. Farnwood has a sound constitution, and he is in the best possible hands. We won't say any more about sending him home for the present.'

So the question was dropped, much to the satisfaction of all concerned—save Mrs Grane.

That lady had warmly seconded her husband's suggestion that they should take Mr Farnwood in; but had done so under the impression that the patient would jump at the doctor's recommendation, and go home as soon as he could be moved. And with no little anxiety she saw her daughter take her place as nurse-in-ordinary. She liked the young man herself; but Mabel was her only daughter, and was a girl regarding whose future any mother might be pardoned for being ambitious. The young lady had only been in Burma a few weeks, having come out from England for the first time shortly before Mr Farnwood's arrival. She had a beauty of her own, and that, with the fresh complexion the climate had not had time to drive from her cheeks, had already won Miss Grane admirers among the most eligible men in the station. A junior police officer, however promising, was scarcely the man an ambitious mother could regard with an eye of favour; and Mabel had betrayed such eagerness to take her share of the nursing duty that Mrs Grane allowed her to do so with considerable misgiving.

It was indeed the casting together of fire and tow. George Farnwood, fresh from the long exile which had made him a stranger to the society of women of his own race, was peculiarly susceptible to their influence. Mabel Grane, but lately released from the schoolroom, brought ready-made admiration and sympathy to bear on one fully entitled to both. She had listened with breathless interest to the story of his fight with the dacoits, as given by her father and mother, while Mr Farnwood was confined to his room; and every day whetted her anxiety to see him and hear the history again from his own mouth.

He had gratified her wish on the first evening they met; and Miss Grane was a little puzzled to find that the chief actor's account differed in one essential particular from those she had already heard. No mention had been made by her parents of the fact that a young Burmese girl had taken a prominent part in the affair, much less that this girl had saved the life of her European friend at fearful cost to herself. The story, as Mr Farnwood told it, possessed a romantic element which multiplied its interest tenfold; and she was at a loss to understand why such a feature should have been ignored. The young man's manner of referring to this girl, moreover, gave the impression that there was still something to learn; but as he did not appear willing to speak of her, Miss Grane's natural delicacy curbed her curiosity.

Mr Farnwood could not share with her a secret he felt bound to withhold from her father, of all men. His marriage with Mah Mee would, he knew, put an end to all promotion in the police; and he felt justified in maintaining silence regarding his matrimonial intentions until the step in rank, he had been unofficially informed was in store for him, was gazetted. The local government of Burma holds that by espousing a daughter of the soil an officer creates a link between himself and those over whom he is placed which is prejudicial to the free exercise of authority. The theory may or may not be correct, but with that we have nothing to do: it exists. George Farnwood knew it, and meant

to take the last step he could hope to get without imperilling it by making premature disclosures. Mabel's omission to inquire into his relations with Mah Mee relieved him greatly, and inspired him with a certain grateful respect. The feeling which had prompted the Burmese girl's self-sacrifice was, he knew, abundantly obvious, and could not fail to rouse the sympathetic interest of any woman. When, therefore, Miss Grane carefully avoided all reference to her in their daily conversations, George Farnwood strove to atone for his reticence on this point by doing his best to entertain and amuse her.

He succeeded only too well; and ere he had been a fortnight under Colonel Grane's hospitable roof, his eyes were opened to the fact that he found in Mabel's society a charm which grew sweeter and stronger every day. They were of necessity thrown much together. The so-called 'cold season' in Burma is only comparative, and during the day the heat precludes outdoor amusement almost as completely as in the recognised hot weather. Mabel had little to occupy her in the house beyond self-imposed tasks; and the guest had nothing to do. Hence, while the Colonel was kept from morning till night in his office, where work just now was unusually heavy, and Mrs Grane was absorbed in household cares, it was in the natural order of things that the two young people should pass their time together. And if the truth must be told, George Farnwood resigned himself to his dangerously pleasant fate with little thought of the entanglement to which intimacy with Mabel might give rise.

But Mrs Grane, passing to and fro on her many duties about the house, would often note with a troubled wrinkling of the brow how close the two heads were to each other, or with what rapt attention her daughter appeared to be listening to Mr Farnwood. It was very plain that the understanding between them was growing, from her point of view, unsatisfactorily good; and at length she felt constrained to speak to her husband on the subject. Colonel Grane, however, did not share her apprehensions as she could have wished.

'You think Farnwood and Mab are falling in love with each other,' he laughed. 'Pon my word, Helen, you give them credit for losing no time. I can't imagine you are right. But, what if they are?'

'Hugh!' exclaimed Mrs Grane incredulously.

'Well, my dear?'

'You surely don't mean that you would approve of such a thing? A police officer on three hundred rupees a month! When Mr Watsdene, and Captain Albroke, and Mr Herringdon—all of them men in a good position—with means—devoted to Mabel,' said Mrs Grane disjointedly.

The Colonel stroked his moustache thoughtfully. 'I don't know anything about the gentlemen you mention so far as their regard for Mab is concerned, except that she doesn't seem to care two straws for any one of them,' he answered with gravity. 'And if I must speak plainly, Helen, I shouldn't in the least object if Farnwood did win Mab's affections.—Now, don't distress yourself,' he continued, laying his hand upon his wife's. 'Farnwood is bound to get on in his profession, and he is as fine a fellow as we

are ever likely to meet. We will just let things slide.'

'It would be a deep disappointment to me,' sighed Mrs Grane. 'But of course'—

A glance from her husband silenced her. 'What was I when we married, Helen?' he asked gently.

Colonel Grane was a penniless subaltern in Her Majesty's service when he committed matrimony; life had been a struggle for many years; but the loud lamentations raised by friends of both parties had never found an echo in the thoughts of either Hugh or Helen Grane.

'Is it quite the same?' asked Mrs Grane slowly.

'Quite; save that Farnwood's prospects are better than mine.—Come, Helen! *We* can't cast a stone at people who marry for love.'

'Of course we are not sure that they do want to marry yet,' said the lady, seeking comfort in the uncertainty she had a few minutes before tried to convince herself did not exist.

'No, we aren't,' answered the Colonel, smiling. 'We will therefore postpone all conjecture till there's better ground for it.'

But ambition is too strong to be easily routed by argument, however subtle or persuasive; and Mrs Grane was by no means gratified to learn, a few days later, that Mr Farnwood had kindly consented to remain in the house for another fortnight or three weeks during the Colonel's absence.

'He was very reluctant to stay,' said his host.

'He has got some foolish idea that he ought not to trespass on our hospitality, as he puts it, any longer. In fact, I had to be candidly selfish, and tell him I only wanted him here as *chaukidar*, which was partly true. The bazaars are full of bad characters just now, you know, wife, and I shall be much easier in my mind if Farnwood is acting watchman while I'm away.'

'Surely there's no fear of dacoity in Rangoon,' said Mrs Grane, rather coldly.

'Not dacoity, in the legal sense of the term—"Five persons or more,"' quoted the Colonel; 'but there is grave danger of incendiarism and burglary; and the presence in the house of a dacoit-slayer like Farnwood is the best possible protection you could have.'

'I can't say I am a nervous woman,' remarked Mrs Grane, holding up her needlework and inspecting it with a critical eye.

'There is not a pluckier woman in the East than yourself, dear,' replied her husband with warm sincerity; 'but you must make allowance for my fears on your account and Mab's.'

The condition of the bazaars gave ample reason for Colonel Grane's wish to provide a protector for his house and its inmates whilst he was away; and he had explained to George Farnwood that the indications of uneasiness in the city urged him to request the continuance of his stay. There had been numerous fires, whose origin could not be traced, and were more than suspected to have been the handiwork of incendiaries. Burglaries of a peculiarly audacious character had been perpetrated in the suburbs, and it was unusually difficult to obtain the evidence of the sufferers. This state of affairs had grown up since the surrender of Mandalay; and the steady increase of violent crime all over

the Lower Province was traceable to the numbers of bad characters who had come from native territory to ply their nefarious trade.

If Mrs Grane did not regard Mr Farnwood's prospective stay with any favour, Mabel's satisfaction made amends for it; and she told the young man frankly that she fully approved her father's action.

'We were not looking forward to being left alone,' she said; 'and it will be much nicer for you to stay with us than to go and live by yourself in that horrid little bungalow near the railway.'

'Are you very nervous people?' inquired Mr Farnwood.

'I am—awfully,' replied Mabel; 'but mother is not; nothing frightens her. She laughs at the idea of dacoity in Rangoon; but then she lived in dreadful places in the jungle when she first married, and measures safety here by the dangers she used to encounter.'

'Did she ever make the acquaintance of dacoits?' asked Mr Farnwood.

'Indeed, she did,' replied Mabel, by no means unwilling to recount adventures such as have befallen few ladies in India since the Mutiny. 'Once she was left alone for a night in camp at some place down in the Mergui district. While she was asleep, a Malay crept into the tent, and stood over her with a kris, threatening to kill her if she did not give up the money papa had with him. Mother put her hand under the pillow, as if to give him the keys, and shot him dead through the sheet.'

'Very few ladies, or men either, for that matter, would have had the presence of mind to do that,' was Mr Farnwood's comment. 'Mrs Grane can use her revolver, evidently.'

'Yes; she contracted a habit of keeping one loaded by the bedside when she was with papa in the Arracan Hill Tracts, and she has never broken herself off it; she says it gives her a sense of security when she is alone.'

'I don't wonder at it if she makes such practice with the pistol.'

Colonel Grane took his departure next day on one of his periodical tours of inspection, and Mr Farnwood entered upon his office of *chaukidar*, which merely required that he should occasionally satisfy himself that the native watchmen did not pass the night in sleep. He could not fail to notice that Mrs Grane's bearing towards him lacked something of its old cordiality; and while he could not have explained exactly how he gathered the impression, he felt that, in spite of Colonel Grane's earnestly reiterated assurances, he was wearing out his welcome with his hostess. That Mrs Grane's change of demeanour was owing to his rapidly advancing intimacy with her daughter did not at first occur to him; but as the days went by and their repeated tête-à-têtes grew more and more confidential, he began to recognise the truth. As a matter of fact, the mother's prognostications had been well founded. George Farnwood suddenly discovered, as one awakens from sleep, that Mabel was far more to him than she had any right to be to a man who was pledged to marry another woman; and while he told himself that he must seize the first opportunity of explaining his position, and

save her the pain he must suffer by breaking off intercourse with her, he continually caught himself wondering whether Mah Mee could not be satisfied with a large pecuniary recompense in place of fulfilment of his promise. And as Mabel grew daily dearer to him, he braced himself to face the question more boldly. Was he bound to ruin his whole career and sacrifice the happiness of his life to requite a debt which had been thrust upon him? Would any one blame him if he set aside a promise which had been wrung from him by an overstrained sense of duty? Then involuntarily his memory flew back to the scenes enacted that night in the Shwaydouggee bungalow. He saw Mah Mee lingering alone in the dark forest, to be near him; he heard her pleading to be allowed to stay and share his danger—or his death. Dared he offer money in return for such love as this? He could not. But the thought of marrying her was now ten thousand times more repulsive to him than it had been two months ago, before he knew Mabel Grane.

And while the difficulties of his position grew hourly greater, while he wavered between faith and falsity with every thought, the knot was cut for him by Mabel herself. They were strolling in the compound one evening, and their talk had taken a deeper turn than it had ever done before; though Mabel had never mentioned Mah Mee's name, she could not forget the girl's heroism, and the nature of her talk with Mr Farnwood to-night seemed to indicate that she might safely touch upon the subject.

'Forgive me for asking you the question,' she said hesitatingly, 'but I have always wanted to know more about the girl who was wounded with you in the dacoit fight. Have you heard lately how she is going on?'

'Not a word, Miss Grane. You see, she can't read or write, nor can her mother; so I am unable to communicate with them.'

Mabel looked up in surprise. 'Do you mean that you have never even tried to find out how she is, Mr Farnwood? That you have allowed two months to pass without even knowing whether she is alive or dead?'

No answer from Mr Farnwood.

'Surely you don't mean that you are utterly indifferent to the fate of the girl to whom you owe your life?' she continued almost pleadingly, 'Mr Farnwood, I can't believe this of you.'

There was a long silence. Mabel would have spoken again; but a glance at her companion's face bade her be silent, and she waited for him to answer.

'You are not to think I have forgotten her,' he said presently, 'or that I do not mean to repay her as fully as I can.—Before I left Shwaydouggee,' he continued, 'I told Mah Mee I intended to marry her, and I am only waiting till my promotion is gazetted to send for her.' He caught Mabel's eye as he spoke, and instantly averted his gaze. 'I did not tell you this before,' he continued, 'because, were the authorities to hear of my intention, they might cancel the promotion they have promised me. My marriage will put a final stop to my professional advancement, and I may as well take what I can now.'

'But is it necessary to do this, Mr Farnwood?'

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burst out Mabel. 'Is it fair to yourself, I mean? It cannot be right to ruin yourself thus.'

'What else can I do, Miss Grane?'

Even had Mabel known what to reply, she could not have spoken at once. She forgot to reproach herself for having for a moment imagined that this man was untrue to the character with which she had invested him: he was worthy of it; of the best she could have attributed to her ideal hero. When she did answer her tone was hard and formal. 'Of course, if you have promised to marry her, you must keep your word,' she said. 'Let us go in; I am growing cold.'

SPORT IN BRITISH HONDURAS.

A FEW months ago a gentleman in British Honduras received from an English correspondent an inquiry as to the sport to be had in that colony. He answered that there was very little to be had, and further dissuaded the inquirer from coming thither to search for game. In this he was probably right, for, unless a man is prepared to rough it to a very considerable extent, and can with safety defy the dangers arising from the malaria of the tropical marshes, tinned food, and often unwholesome water, and has a skin impervious to the attacks of sandflies, mosquitoes, and ticks, with which the bush is infested, he had better not attempt to explore the forests in search of sport.

The statement, however, that there is very little to be had we do not consider correct; and a man who is prepared to face these dangers, or who is indifferent to them, will find in British Honduras such opportunities for gratifying his love of adventure as may well recompense him for his journey to this little-known and only partly-explored colony.

Jaguar and puma are fairly numerous in the southern and western districts; while one species at least of ocelot is common; the quash and the night-walker, probably the quasje and the kinkajou of science, as well as the opossum and the little ant-eater, are plentiful; an animal locally known as the 'Bush Dog,' which we think is the tayra, is found. Otters, with beautiful fur, haunt the rivers, and the howling monkeys are also common in the southern portion of the colony.

Turning to those that would afford the traveller a welcome change from his diet of salt pork and army rations, there are the peccary, as well as the white-lipped variety, the warree, an animal which, when in droves, is so fierce and so formidable with its long sharp tusks that even the jaguar will not venture to attack it. The tapir or mountain cow, more dreaded by the native than even the jaguar, is also eaten, as are the gibbonet, the Indian rabbit, and the armadillo.

Deer are fairly plentiful in the colony, and there are probably several species, amongst which the Mexican deer finds a place. Stalking is very little resorted to, the deer being mostly come upon accidentally in the pine-ridges; occasionally, however, the small plantations are cautiously

approached up wind in the early morning; and at other times the pine-ridge is fired in a few places, and the hunter returns when the young shoots are just beginning to sprout.

The iguana is very common, and the traveller will always be in a position to procure this delicacy, which, though repulsive-looking in life, affords a dish very like chicken, and by no means to be despised even by an epicure.

Turning now to the birds, he will find a considerable number of species. Among game-birds will be seen the crested curassow; the guan, locally called the quam; and the delicious tinamou partridge. On the western frontier he may meet with the beautiful Honduras turkey, now becoming rare, a bird which alone is worth all the journey to Central America and the hardships of travel. Wild-fowl are numerous during the winter months, making their appearance simultaneously with the advent of strong north winds, which commence about October every year.

The commonest of the duck family, at least about Belize, is the teal, which is to be seen in small wisps flying about the marshes at the back of the town. In the marsh-belt, which extends some fifteen miles inland, are found innumerable egrets, boat-bill herons, night-herons, cranes, and a species of ibis about the size of a fowl, locally called the clucking-hen. Pelicans are very numerous, and are generally to be seen in flocks of six or seven around the 'cays' and the shoal water of the coast. It is considerably smaller than the African species, and is of a light gray colour, with the exception of the quill feathers, which are black, and the neck, which is of a rich maroon colour.

The American osprey and a smaller kind of fish-hawk may at any time be seen hovering over the coast; and numerous birds of prey are to be found; one we remember seeing being little larger than a wood-pigeon, with light-blue wing coverts, each feather of which was spotted with black; and another, a kind of buzzard, with tremendous claws and beak, in whose crop, however, we could find only wheikis.

The graceful frigate-bird is one of the commonest sights to the inhabitants of Belize, and can be said, indeed, to be always visible. We have often watched these birds sailing along, now rising and now descending without any apparent motion of the wings, though we have fancied we detected a slight movement of the long forked tail.

Parrots are very numerous in the colony, of which two species are frequently tamed and make fair talkers, though inferior to the gray African bird. Toucans are represented by two or three species, and are commonly seen around Belize in the autumn months when the tamarinds and wild grapes are ripe. There is excellent pigeon-shooting to be had at the 'cays' in November and December; the species generally shot is called locally the bald pate, from the white patch of feathers on its head.

To the ornithologist, an excursion in this colony could not fail to be of the greatest interest, as the number of the different species of birds cannot fall far short of, if it does not exceed two hundred. Around Belize alone we have been able to identify upwards of twenty; while there are at least a dozen more that we know well, but

cannot determine the exact classification, and we have neither taken into account any members of the finch or linnet tribes, nor the humming-birds, of which there are several species.

Fish are to be found in great variety both in the sea and in the rivers; but their capture, especially in the latter, is very seldom attempted, and the art of fishing is very little understood. The home market is fairly well supplied with fish, principally by the inhabitants of the 'cays,' who effect their capture by means of casting-nets and seines, both home-made, as well as by lobster-pots, drop-fishing, and trolling.

Sharks infest the sea, and are found in great numbers in the harbour, making bathing impossible except in 'crawls' constructed for the purpose, a precaution which the large number of deaths from the jaws of these monsters fully justifies.

In order to give the intending visitor some idea of the game likely to be encountered, we will give a brief account of two morning excursions in search of game, one in the marshes on the outskirts of the town, and the other in the heart of the bush.

In the winter of 1888 we occupied quarters at the old military barracks, which are situated on the shore, about half a mile to the north of the town. The parade ground lies between the buildings and the sea; and, as it is for the most part below sea-level, it is very swampy, and affords a capital hunting-ground for plover and crane. When the strong north winds, accompanied as they frequently are with heavy drenching showers, blow, the swamps and marshes around are frequented by duck and teal, and in the early morning one stands a chance of having some good sport. On one such morning early in December we set out to try our luck, nor were we disappointed; for suddenly with a shrill whistle a bird rose from the shore, and with a snap-shot we managed to secure it, a species of whimbrel, locally known as the Turkey plover. The report of the gun seemingly roused to life the shore; flocks of sandpiper, interspersed with dotterel, wheeled around once or twice before settling, while with a loud cry of alarm a 'Georgie Bull' winged its way to the marsh. This curious bird is very common about Belize, and appears to have similar habits to the moorhen. Pursuing our way along the shore we heard, presently, a harsh grating cry, which we recognised as the call of a toucan, coming from the direction of a tamarind tree. Cautiously approaching, we were successful in securing it. This bird, about the size of an English jackdaw, is, of course, chiefly remarkable for its beak, which is shaped like an inverted keel, being four inches long by two inches broad, and was light green in colour, with a band of light purple running all along the upper mandible. The throat and cheeks were orange, and the back of the head was black with a crimson gloss; the back, breast, and wings were of a black-blue colour; the upper tail coverts were pure white, and the under deep vermillion.

At the report of the gun a loud rattling alarm came from a cocoa-nut palm, and away dashed a belted kingfisher. We felt tempted to send the contents of our second barrel after it, for many a time has that shrill warning cry at a critical

moment robbed us of our game. The next moment we were glad we refrained, for flying over the rifle-range we spotted two blue-winged teal, which we marked down in a small pond the other side of the marsh; and aided by the long coarse grass and the high banks of the pool, we made a successful stalk, but, alas! an unsuccessful shot; and the two teal winged their rapid flight inland.

As we returned home we secured a magnificent osprey, which we intended to preserve. We had heard great things of our local taxidermist, and had seen some fairly creditable work of his, so we sent him the bird together with a couple of buzzards and a tyrant fly-catcher, and asked him to skin them. Three months passed away in silence, and then a parcel arrived. We opened it, and there lay a confused mass of feathers, in which with some difficulty we recognised the buzzards, or rather the remnants, but no osprey or fly-catcher. In their stead was a letter from the artist, expressing great regret for his failure, and for which he did us the favour of not charring; but he excused himself on the plea that the 'fish-hawk is too tender to be skinned, and the woodpecker was too badly wounded.'

Towards the end of March we left Belize with a friend in a sailing-vessel for Jonathan Point, a place some sixty miles distant to the south, where there was a cocoa-nut walk and banana plantation belonging to a Captain M—, at whose house we were going to put up. We started about nine on a beautiful moonlight night, with a fair wind. Arriving at our destination, we were cordially welcomed by our host; and after a refreshing dip in the sea and a substantial breakfast, we sat down to discuss the programme for our visit. It was decided that we should make a start at daybreak next morning, under the guidance of an experienced Carib bushman. In the meantime our host offered to show us his plantation. Accordingly, we started along the beach and through a fine cocoa-nut grove; then turning inland, we struck a narrow bridle-path nowhere wider than a riding, and in most places no bigger than the rack of the Midland counties. After a walk of about a mile and a half we reached the plantation, which was situated along the bank of the South Stann Creek River, at that time at very low water. This river, which rises in the Cockscomb Mountains, and which was made the basis of operations whereby to explore that range just one year later than the date of which we are writing, reminded us very forcibly, with its alternate shallows and deep pools, of a trout stream. During our walk we saw only a few small birds; and though we took our guns with us, we only got a shot at one bird, called by the natives 'peam-peam,' a mangy-looking gray crow.

For the benefit of those intending to try bush-shooting in this colony, we must warn any one against attempting it in the rig-out as we did. We simply wore the ordinary English shooting-suit, with a cartridge belt instead of a bag; but long before we had gone a couple of miles, we were envying our guide, who, with a loose linen smock and trousers, was pounding along with bare feet, as if he was on a smooth hard road. B—, who had been bush-shooting before, was

better off, as he had his suit of lighter material, and wore moccasins, while we had shooting-boots.

The thing which struck me most was the almost entire absence of underwood, as we should understand it in England; its place was taken by a bewildering network of creepers, well named tie-ties, which ran along the ground and leapt from tree to tree in wild array. The ground was covered with dead leaves, often completely hiding the tie-ties and interlacing roots of the trees, making it extremely difficult to avoid stumbling, and still harder to prevent scaring any game that might be in the neighbourhood. We only noticed one flower, a kind of convolvulus, the blossoms of which were very similar in colour to prim-roses.

The trees were of all sizes, from the 'poke-no-boys,' the size of broom handles, and armed with long stout thorns, up to the magnificent silk-cotton tree, whose wedge-shaped buttresses rose at least twenty-five feet from the ground. We went in single file, our guide first, armed with a heavy machete or cutlass, with which he cleared a path; and a muzzle-loader charged with about two ounces of SSG shot. I came next, armed with one of Lancaster's Colindians, with BB in the right barrel, and an ounce and three-quarters' bullet in the left; and last of all came B— with one of Greener's guns, loaded with buckshot in both barrels.

Soon after entering the bush, I had a rare fright, for a tie-tie caught under the hammer of my gun and exploded the charge. Luckily, I always carry my gun pointing well to the side, so I only cut up the ground for a few yards to the left of the party; but our guide jumped as if he had really been shot, and seemed very unwilling to believe that he was not wounded; while I was rather scared, and thought that I had minimised our chances of success by the untimely discharge.

After another half-hour's walk, however, the Carib turned round and whispered excitedly that he 'smelt warree;' and with rising hopes, we crept cautiously through the bush, and in a few minutes came upon the creek, now a dry bed, with here and there a pool of stagnant water or patch of soft mud. Down this water-course we stole, still in Indian file, for a few hundred yards; when the acuteness of our guide's olfactory organs was fully verified, for we came upon a soft patch churned with the marks of innumerable feet, and even I smelt a strong and unmistakable odour of pig. With, if possible, more caution, we crept on, until suddenly the Carib pointed towards the right bank, and I saw, a few yards away in the bush, a 'warree.' We all three fired simultaneously; and the Carib followed up his shot with a dash among the trees, and almost immediately we heard him shoot again; and following, as best we could, we found him standing over an expiring warree, which had a large ugly wound on its back. To this the guide jubilantly pointed, and claimed the pig as his prize, asserting that we had all missed our first shots; and having dragged the game a few yards, he went off to look for some dry wood for singeing it, preparatory to taking it home.

As soon as he had left, being rather sceptical

as to the ability of any man, however expert, to overtake an unwounded and startled warree in the bush, and having noticed the great trouble the Carib had taken to keep one side of the pig uppermost, I quietly turned it over, and there, sure enough, to our great delight was a large wound behind its left shoulder, which was certainly not made by the Carib's slugs. We mutually congratulated one another, for, though we should certainly have lost the pig had it not been for our guide's wonderful quickness and second shot, yet we were confident that he could never have come up to it if it had not been disabled at our first discharge.

When he returned, I silently pointed out to him the wound behind the shoulder, and he at once affirmed that it was also the effect of his second barrel; but how one charge was capable of making two wounds at right angles to one another he was unable to explain, and he appeared rather discomfited.

He now cleaned the warree, and carefully cut out the musk glands over its tail, and then, hanging it up to a poke-no-boy, he piled dry leaves and branches round it until it was almost entirely concealed and then fired the pile. In about five minutes the pig was well singed; and then, having tied its legs together with a tie-tie, he hung the eighty pounds of pork round his neck and led the way home at a fast walk.

On our return journey, beyond losing our way for a few minutes and flushing a tinamon, which rose some distance in front of us, nothing particular occurred, and we were soon enjoying the luxury of a bath, preparatory to sitting down to a luxurious dinner, at which stewed iguana and warree steak formed the principal dishes.

If this paper should succeed in awakening the interest of scientific men for this little-known colony, and so be the humble means of opening out to science new and strange forms of life, which we are sure exist within its limits, or at least of enabling more extended information to be gained regarding the habits of little-known animals, we shall be amply repaid for our labour on a subject which, indeed, is to us ever fraught with interest and pleasure.

VIRTUES ASCRIBED TO PRECIOUS STONES.

It is not merely on account of their beauty and great rarity that precious stones have from remote ages been held in the highest favour, although, no doubt, these alone are the reasons that have weight with us at the present day. Imitation gems are almost as pleasing to many people as the genuine ones; and when they are worn simply for personal adornment, their comparative cheapness is certainly an advantage to those of slender means. Moreover, precious stones are often so cleverly imitated that it is very difficult for any one but an expert to distinguish a spurious gem from a real one.

There was a time, however, when these stones were often prized and worn for other reasons than their beauty; and therefore, even the most perfect imitations would in such cases have been regarded as utterly valueless. Of

course it must not be inferred that our ancestors always wore valuable gems, for even in those days the poorer classes had to content themselves with cheap ornaments when they indulged in finery. But precious stones were formerly supposed to possess peculiar virtues, which, apart from any other considerations, rendered them more or less valuable. The reputed virtues of some were of a most miraculous nature, and happy indeed the fortunate possessors of these gems ought to have been.

Although popularly supposed to be itself a deadly poison, the diamond has from remote ages been credited with the power of protecting the wearer from the evil effects of other poisons, a reputation which it retained until comparatively recent times. According to Pliny, it also keeps off insanity. Amber, too, was supposed to possess the latter virtue. Besides the diamond, several other stones were supposed to possess medicinal virtues. The ruby was considered good for derangements of the liver as well as for bad eyes. The sapphire and emerald were also credited with properties which rendered them capable of influencing ophthalmic disorders, and there is a superstitious belief that serpents are blinded by looking at the latter stone.

The turquoise, although not credited with either remedial or protective properties so far as disease was concerned, was nevertheless regarded as a kind of sympathetic indicator, the intensity of its colour being supposed to fluctuate with the health of the wearer. The latter, moreover, by virtue of the stone which he carried, could, it was said, fall from any height with impunity. The Marquis of Villena's fool, however, was somewhat nearer the truth when he reversed the popular superstition in his assertion that the wearer of a turquoise might fall from the top of a high tower and be dashed to pieces without breaking the stone.

The opal was looked upon as a thunder-stone, and although many women now appear to have a strong superstitious prejudice against wearing one, it was in bygone days held in the highest estimation, for it was supposed to combine the virtues of several other gems. On the other hand, the onyx—so named on account of its resemblance to the colour of the finger-nails—could scarcely have been a nice stone to wear, for, according to medieval superstition, it rendered one particularly susceptible to annoyance from nightmares and demons.

Temperance advocates, if they have any regard for the beliefs of the Greeks and Romans, might seriously consider the advisability of distributing amethysts among drunkards, for it was supposed that these stones prevented intoxication. Coral was made use of by the Romans as a protection against the evil eye; and popular superstition has credited the topaz with the power of depriving boiling water of its heat.

Perhaps the most wonderful properties, however, were ascribed to the chimerical stones which many creatures were supposed to carry in their heads. Most of our readers have no doubt heard of the precious jewel which the toad carries in his brain-box; and so-called toad-stones, which were in reality the teeth of fossil fish, were formerly worn in finger rings as a protection against poisons, at the presence of which they were

supposed to change colour. It was thought that the best stones were those voluntarily ejected by the living toads; but as the latter were not addicted to freely giving up their treasures in that way, it was necessary to procure the coveted articles by other means, and the recognised method was to decapitate the hapless batrachian at the instant he swallowed his breath. The feat naturally demanded considerable celerity, such as could only have been acquired by constant practice; and it is not unreasonable, therefore, to assume that although the endeavours to gain possession of the jewel were perhaps numerous, they must invariably have been unsatisfactory, especially to the toads. The eagle stone was considered an excellent thing to wear during pregnancy, and the swallow carried in its stomach stones of great medicinal value.

The brain of the tortoise was supposed to contain a wonderful stone, which was efficacious in extinguishing fire, and when placed under the tongue, would produce prophetic inspiration. Another stone possessing the latter property was to be found in the eye of the hyena. The head of the cat, however, was thought to contain what would undoubtedly have been the most wonderful and most desirable treasure of all, could it have only had a real instead of an imaginary existence, for that man who was so fortunate as to possess this precious stone would have all his wishes granted.

VOICES.

DECEMBER'S wind was keen and shrill;

The streets were desert, bleak, and bare;

I could but only feel the thrill

Of wintry sky and leaden air,

Made but more leaden in the glare

Of lamp and gas, as on the ear

There fell a voice whose faded trill

Gave little sign of merrie cheer;

For Fortune's hardest shafts are hurled

On hearts that hunger through the world.

The face was thin and wan; the frock

So tattered, scanty, old, and thin,

Was feeble screen to meet the shock

Of cold without and cold within;

Yet ever clear above the din

There rose: 'The thief rejoiced to see

That fountain in his day:' to mock

It did but seem her misery,

And Fortune's hardest shafts but hurled

On hearts that hunger through the world.

'I will not leave thee nor forsake,'

Is yet the only voice that cheers

The aching heart of man to slake

His weary lot of hopes and fears—

Frail pendulum 'twixt smiles and tears!—

To find a haven safe at last,

And anchorage therein to take,

From the keen wind and biting blast

Of Fortune's shafts, no longer hurled

On hearts that hungered through the world.

W. K. LEASK.

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